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The Nativity

By Martin Schongauer

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The Divine Helplessness

By JULIEN GUNN, O.H.C.

CHRISTIANITY in fact is a stumbling-block, a scandal, as St. Paul called the Cross. A great many people who call themselves Christians are unaware or afraid to acknowledge this important fact. There are so many efforts made to water down the truth, to make it tame, to cushion the shock that it really gives. God's love is shocking, thoroughly unrespectable, for in the final analysis it is humble.

The little Baby in the manger has become too often the object of maudlin sentimentality. We think it sweet and we look on the outward manifestation. The board donkey and the plastic snow, how they mock the stark reality that God had put on Himself the helplessness of an infant!

How we hate to be called helpless. That is the taunt a provoked mother will use to lead an adolescent to enterprise. That is the way a husband will shame his wife into doing something he does not want to be bothered with undertaking. We hate to hear others say that against us.

If we dislike for others to impute help-

lessness to us, how much more do we hate to admit it to ourselves? "Oh, I am O.K.," the injured man will say after an accident. "I'm not so bad off that I need to be taken to the doctor." A deaf person will often fly into a rage if a hearing-aid is suggested. "I can hear all right. You don't have to shout at me, I'm not deaf. You ought to speak distinctly; don't mumble." If we find it insulting to be called helpless, we would rather die than admit it to ourselves: such is human pride.

When it comes to reckoning with our God, it takes on somewhat the same color. After all idolatry is still the great sin, and although we are seldom so obvious as to carve a statue or paint a picture of an idol, we still can draw a mental picture of our god; the god we intend to worship, and identify him with the Almighty of Scripture and history.

"That's not the kind of god I believe in!" is the almost sure sign of corrosive spiritual idolatry. When a man says that, it is almost certain that he has ceased to believe in the God of revelation, and has domesticated an

inoffensive deity who will be a rubber stamp to whim, prejudice and sloth.

This is why the Jesus of the New Testament is in fact an alien to the thoughts of many professed Christians: He was and is not altogether the most comfortable person to have around. The human nature united eternally to the divine nature of the Second Person of the Trinity is a shock to our respectable easy consciences.



MADONNA AND CHILD
Trinity Church, New York City

The "dear" Christmas Crib in "our sw little Episcopal Church" which is set up under the direction of "our nice little Episcopal minister" is a shocking and radical declaration of what the Lord God was willing to do. It is not simply man's highest ideal of motherhood and childbearing; it is a stumbling-block of what God would undertake to bring silly, stupid, proud and helpless man back to his forfeited heritage.

Here in the crib is GOD. The baby Jesus is God incarnate, and what a shocking revolutionary fact that is! The Second Person of the Trinity is the Word. St. John tells us that through Him everything was created. The divine Artificer, the moulder of nebulae and galaxies, has assumed a very created nature which He Himself brought into being. Does it make sense? No, to the sinfully proud intelligence of the man who would hate to admit weakness. Could he submit to being "changed" or to nursing his mother while a bunch of rustic shepherds looked on, for, say a million dollars or the presidency? That is a shocking question. God was willing to do this in human flesh, not for worldly power or wealth, but for the great quest of winning back a man of stubborn, blind and indifferently unrepentant sinners.

Every boy longs to grow up; and every girl becomes a baby!

"How can this be?" we ask. Mary asked the same question, though in different context, and she was told that all things were possible with God. It is not really a matter of possibility then, if we are going to accept our belief in an omnipotent deity; it is whether *we* would choose such a method. There it is! We want God in our image; we cannot stand to have Him do the unhuman and unexpected. We dislike helplessness; we cannot imagine God choosing it deliberately.

God, through the Incarnation, has chosen the method of salvation which was most fitting to His purpose. Man's battle is fought for him in human nature: the old man is reconciled through the new man, Jesus Christ. The Incarnation also reveals the nature of God through a medium most appropriate.

role for man's comprehension. The sneer of the unbeliever that to a clam, God must appear as a big clam, has the truth at its base: that God was going to make Himself known in the most intelligible form to the creature He was going to save. We may love to surround ourselves with dogs, cats, horses or goldfish, but can we ever understand what goes on in their heads? Certainly not. We may lisp baby talk to these creatures, but there is no rational comprehension involved in what response they may give. When we want to communicate ideas (we are not hopelessly queer) we talk to a human being, and generally to one who speaks our own language, not in Japanese. When God wishes to make Himself known to man, He takes on man's nature and talks to him as man.

But is it not enough to have the example of a good man, even the best man, to serve as a model for us? Would it not be enough to see Jesus as the man who sublimely shows us the greatest values of God, and to set before us the standards for the "abundant life?"

As attractive as this may sound and as often as this cambric tea Christianity has been served out for human consumption during the last hundred years, this is the supreme mockery of human problems and a travesty of Christian revelation. Man does not need more revelations of what he can be, or even of what he should be. The Jews could not even keep the law of Moses; most of us cannot live up to the worldly-wise standards of Confucius. Why make it harder?

The essence of Christianity is not to be found in a code of moral perfection which is beyond the possibility of fulfilment. Our faith tells us that we are helpless. We need aaviour more than a paragon. The starting point for the Christian is the admission of weakness, not the appeal to strength. A drowning man cannot be saved by a lecture on swimming, he wants the brawny life guard to come in and save him. The faint cry of "Help" from man brought God to the scene.

But here is just where the unexpected happened: God's strength was shown in His inability to conform Himself truly to the hu-



man situation by starting in the beginning. He became a human infant that man might grow up "into a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (*Ephesians*, 4:13) He did it by taking the same path we have to take, from the beginning: conception, birth and infancy. His perfect conformity and obedience at each step is the alarming and disarming proclamation of our fallen state. He does the better job of being a baby than any one of us.

The freely assumed helplessness of the infant Jesus becomes our hope in the frustrating battle to be strong. We flex our spiritual muscles and then catch a glimpse of the manger. There we see good working through immaturity and weakness. Our supposed strength is shamed.

Know that here is God, or give up hope of ever knowing what God is like. The Babe in the manger is the hope of us all. "The weakness of God is stronger than men." (*I Corinthians*, 1:25) This scene can, then, produce but two reactions: perplexed disgust or—adoration.

With the Tongue of Angels

An Advent Meditation

BY MERLE WALKER

A STRANGE refrain accompanies all the events that surround Our Lord's nativity: the angelic imperative, "Fear not." To each person and group who prepare for and receive the Infant Christ, these messengers bring one identical command. An angel comes to Zacharias at the end of a holy but barren marriage, and speaks it for the first time: "Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear a son." When the angel Gabriel comes to the Blessed Virgin, she is troubled at his greeting and casts in her mind "what manner of salutation this might be." And the angel says "Fear not, Mary." St. Joseph, knowing what would be the world's interpretation of the conception of the Son of God, is thrown into an agony of bitter suspicion. To him too, an angel appears in a dream with the same command, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife." The shepherds, on the holy night that must have seemed at first like any other night, look up from their absorption with the sheep and their own weariness. The glory of the Lord comes upon them, and the angel says unto them: "Fear not, for behold, he is born unto you." The event for which the world has waited since Eden comes to pass in the world of time and of men; heaven is brought to earth; man is to be reconciled to God; the desire of all nations is fulfilled, and everywhere the first trembling human reaction is fear.

What is this fear from which heaven must first free those who would receive the Christ? There are three different kinds of fear, one holy, one unholy, and one merely natural. Most of us know them all. First, there are natural fears which come from man's existence in a powerful physical universe where he is so much weaker than the forces of nature. He finds himself in his daily life

at the mercy of flood and drought, of winter and cold and parching heat, of disease and disaster. To these he reacts in various ways with an involuntary fear in his very vitals, the hollowness at the pit of his physical being, the cold sweat, the quaking of his members. He knows, too, in the tremor of his imagination, gnawing social fears which grow out of his poor attempts to live with his fellow man's wants and needs in a crowded society, under rulers and in obedience to political laws. We have all known the natural fears at times; the fear of pain, of a long, crippling illness; the fear of poverty or insecurity, for ourselves and our children; the fear of war and injustice, of slavery and oppression, the fear of corrupt rulers and of an unknown environment; the fear of loneliness and loss of loved ones. These are the fears Hamlet said, "the thousand natural sh' that the flesh is heir to." But the angel is speaking of these. They are the mere material of courage, in themselves neither good nor evil.

There is a second kind of fear—holy fear—of which the Old Testament writers speak—that it is the beginning of wisdom: the fear of God, or holy awe, that goes with prayer and adoration. Isaiah knew this fear when he looked on God and cried, "Woe is me, for I have seen the Lord of hosts! . . . I am clean." St. Peter was to know it later when he beheld the miraculous draught of fishes and knew Christ for God, and cried out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" We know this holy fear at the SANCTUS and at the altar, when we kneel to God's glory and receive Christ's presence and know we are unworthy. Then we speak the purged fear of the saints: the fear of a terror of anything that would separate us from the love of God, a dread of wound by our wickedness or failure, the Sacred Heart of Christ. St. Paul was, as usual,

the proper word for this holy dread: precisely the "ghostly fear" which is one of the unique fruits of the Holy Spirit Himself, the peculiarly Christian species of that larger genus of awestruck wonder to which Mr. Charles Williams has restored the exact Latin name. STUPOR, he calls it, an entirely bewildered, yet entirely delighted absorption of the self in a larger being of which among creatures only the soul of man is capable, and then only as the result of disciplined attention, self-sacrifice and obedience. Some scientists like Madame Curie knew *stupor* as devotion to truth; mystics know it as inspiration, the receiving from beyond themselves of an insight into reality, known at once as impersonal and independent of self, yet passionately possessed and generously imparted through the disciplines of art; even modest men, with a capacity for loving what they cannot understand, experience it at times in the presence of great music or mighty works of literature. Wordsworth knew it in the face of nature and felt "a presence that disturbs me with the joy of elevated thoughts." Romantic lovers know it in their beloved. It entails at times a deep fear of its betrayal by the unpredictable egoisms of the petty self, and yet a profound, tranquil and selfless joy in the mere fact of an objective existence. For *stupor*, whether natural, aesthetic or Christian, is two keenly separable, yet intimately merged qualities of being: it is at once the most highly objective and the most intensely personal of all experiences. Always it has about it the nature of free revelation rather than a willed discovery. It is ever experienced as a gift. Something known beyond all ambiguity as *real* is being disclosed, laid open, made bare. The self and the Other are in an unmistakable contact. All discipline, all desire, all obedience and diligent effort are a preparation for this. Yet the experience of self is known and felt as basically unmerited and unearned. The mind, the heart, the soul beholds or glimpses what it did not and could not create. The sense of objectivity is preponderant, prior both in time and in importance. Only later the experience is claimed and felt as personal and possessed in a response of pure joy that is known as a



NATIVITY

(Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art)

return, even a descent, to self. The sense of possession adds nothing either to the existence or value of what is revealed. For this holy fear is purgative; it entails some measure of repentance as its consequence. The vision of truth convicts the mind of all interested motives and favorite prejudices, of

all hidden desires for prestige and intellectual flattery; the vision of beauty convicts the imagination of all adulterous attachments to emotional indulgence and mere self-expression; the vision of the holy identity of the beloved sends the lover to view his own face in the mirror with distaste. But the vision of God convicts the soul of sin. The psalmist was right when he said "Stand in awe and sin not." The return to self is the experience of contrast, and the sharp joy of momentary union is accompanied by the wound of contrition. Short of the love of God itself, holy fear is the most blessed of human experiences, and when it is united with the theological virtue of charity it becomes adoration. It is surely not of this fear, then, that the angel speaks.

But there is a third kind of fear, born neither of our weak place in nature and so-

ciety, nor of our true awareness of God, but of sin. This is the fear of Adam and Eve in the Garden—a deliberate withdrawal from God's presence, that makes men try to hide from His companionship and live apart from Him. The most terrible result of sin is that it makes men afraid of God and of holiness so that they fly from Him as they have never flown from disease or war, or pain or even death itself.

"He came unto His own and His own received Him not." That statement is a part of St. John's realistic version of the Christmas story. Like the world, too often we forget the angelic warning against fear and think of the Nativity with a picture-postcard imagination. Christmas is all candles and candle light, subdued quietness and glitter: "All is calm, all is bright." So it is, in the manger and at the altar, where there is penitence, obedience and holy love. But beyond that radiance around the stable and the holy table stretches the thick outer darkness of a world that is pitifully afraid of Christ. Our Lord drew near to Bethlehem in the first Advent and found it too crowded, too busy, too preoccupied with its old natural fears of oppression and taxation, of slavery and exile. He draws near to Metropolis at Advent 1953, and to-day, too, he finds men afraid of God as he does not fear even war or the atomic bomb. Everywhere men hide from Christ in the nearest natural shelter. Women hide from Him in the dream of a perfectly run household or an effective social career; rulers hide from His kingdom in schemes for world-wide utopias of pure natural good-will; the young hide from Him in the protective conformity of a club or social group; the old hide from Him in the complacent remembrance of past accomplishments and cherished honors; scholars hide from His truth and His Church in high and higher Babels of human reason. Behind the careful surface of good manners, reticence, and competence lies a terrible dread of the Presence of God. Mothers are afraid to show Him to their children, and say, uneasily but firmly, "Oh yes, the Church is a good thing, but too much religion makes people queer. I want my children to be normal." Adolescents, whose shy ideas

DEVOUTLY KNEELING

BY ANNE TROTT TALMAGE

XI

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

This evil is a thing which quite surrounds

Our lives. On every side we are beset
By what we think and what we see, and
sounds

From troubled depths and shallow
pools. Oh, let

Us not be so confounded that we fall
In helplessness from which we cannot
rise.

Deliver us, our Father, from them all
And point our pathway steadfast toward the skies.

Do Thou defend us from adversity
To mind and body. Let our hearts become

Not hard and blind in our prosperity.
Lord, in Thy mercy, keep us always
from

The greatest evil that can cloud our
way:

To find we have forgotten how to pray.



THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

By Giovanni Bellini

(Courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.)
[Mellon Collection]

man in unguarded moments cries out for him as the "end of all desires," run away to immediate pleasures and shrug Him off impatiently." If you're too religious you won't have any fun!" The thinker cloaks himself in the false liberalism that passes for originality and exclaims, "I don't believe in precepts and dogmas. No one is going to tell me what to think. Religion destroys the power to reason." After two thousand years of Christ the cry of the world is still the same old cry:

"Leave us alone. We do not want a new life. We are used to the old theories, the old sufferings and the old joys. True, the old ideas have not worked very well. The hopes of universal education have not brought very much real improvement. The increased hours of leisure, the complex forms of recreation and satisfaction have not brought very much real peace to stave off that three-o'clock-in-the-morning emptiness, but we are used to that. Do not disturb us with penitence and holiness. We have

some pretty good ideas we have got from the daily papers and the schoolroom, from books and the radio, and we shall manage. No, we are not really very happy, but perhaps we shall feel better when we have had a "day off" or a week at the seashore. We do not somehow *love* very well, but . . . perhaps when our glands are working better; . . . maybe a shot of this or that, and our sex lives will get straightened out. No, we are not very secure, but our bonds come due in 1965, and with social security and old age insurance, we'll get along. Something does truly seem to be the matter with the world, but if "they" can get the United Nations to working and bring the boys home from Korea, maybe we'll have peace in our time."

Here in 1953, men turn in fear from Christ as the poor women in T. S. Eliot's play *Murder in the Cathedral* turned from the sanctity of Becket's martyrdom. They prefer their crushing natural fears to the upsetting curative of holiness. Through the long disease of sin, man has developed an

appetite only for the usual, the familiar, for that which takes no effort. He cries out to Christ, as the poor women cried of the martyrdom of one they knew:

We did not wish anything to happen
We understood the private catastrophe
The personal loss, the general misery
Living and partly living
The terror by night that ends in daily action
The terror by day that ends in sleep.
But the talk in the market place, the hand on
the broom,
The nighttime heaping of the ashes,
The fuel laid in the fire at daybreak
These acts marked a limit to our suffering.
Every horror had its definition
Every sorrow had a kind of end.
In life there is not time to grieve long.

The heartbreaking paradox of sin, which so moved God's compassion that He gave His Son, is that blind man flies from what

he most deeply desires. He is afraid of Christ because he is afraid of the two things that are the very measure of his own being: freedom and love. Nothing can satisfy him but love, for he was made in the image of love. Nothing can satisfy him but freedom, for God made him free that he might choose to love. Yet everywhere he recoils from what he really is. He desires freedom idly, fights war and makes constitutions to insure it, yet over and over he chooses the same old fetters and chains. He huddles nervously in desperate conformity to some passing social group; he spends his energy and leisure, even his financial security, keeping up with the Joneses, despite his horrible boredom with expanding wants and repetitive satisfaction; he is afraid of the opinion of the neighbors, the judgment of his friends, the disapproval of parents, husband or children. He accepts blindly the harsh understood pronouncements of his favorite editorial writer, his psychiatrist, or the fashionable school of philosophy and he calls this slavery to passing winds of doctrine "freedom of thought." He is in bondage to exhausting habits he has never tried to break, dependent on weekly routine amusements, the same old pleasures that grow staler and staler, and this he calls "doing as I please." He imagines he is free to think, to do, to enjoy, yet betrays his slavery to thousands of persons, wants and mechanized actions, when he admits that he is afraid of Christ because he is "afraid of being queer."

As he rejects real freedom, so he rejects real love. He was made for love, yet he chooses instead icy reticence, timid casual acquaintanceships, marriages of convenience. He is terribly afraid of love, for deep within by that light "which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world" he knows that no one really deserves to be loved. He suspects, in truthful moments, that he is really very lovable. He knows—and he feels that God knows—that what he calls love is really masked self-love. In those occasional glimpses of himself that send him headlong out to find the nearest movie, he realizes he has chosen his wife for his own comfort and happiness, that he has made this friend for business advantage and that for social pre-



He is ashamed that secretly he envies good fortune, and is jealous of their position for others. He knows that even his loves for children are in part an attempt to give his own life over more satisfactorily to them. Yet he wants more than anything in the world to be loved. In his desperate yearning for affection he hopes that no one—his friend, child, most of all, God—will know him as he really is or all will be lost. Yet the end of that fear of honor and truth is a haunting inner loneliness, a hopeless sorrow that no one *could* love him as he really is. Nothing can fill that loneliness but a love that knows all his sinfulness, loves on regardless, and restores by forgiving. But he flies from the love of Christ.

He needs to love, too—not only to be loved. He wishes at times to give generously, but he was made not only to receive, but to give. Something inside, some trace of that original stage in which he was formed, longs for sacrifice and self-surrender. He wishes to give himself away, without thought of return or gain, but only in the crisis of war he dares to offer himself without self-consciousness. Normally, he is afraid of all heroism, for fear of being laughable, and afraid to love greatly, for fear of being hurt. He fears, too, to share the great sufferings of those he loves, for, apart from God, he knows he has nothing of comfort for the sorrowful, the orphan, the mother of an afflicted child, the disabled, the failure. He is moved, more than he dares admit, by all pain and grief, but he is uncomfortable about honest emotion and shrinks from it with the feeble effort, "Oh, I like people, but I don't want to be intimate with anyone." It was the knowledge of this, man's paralysing fear of freedom and of love that wrung from Christ his lament over Jerusalem "If only you knew the things that belong to your peace!" and prompted one of St. Teresa's most wonderful prayers:

Lord, consider that we do not understand ourselves, and that we do not know what we would, and that we go infinitely astray from that which we desire.

There is a sense, however, in which these frightened souls about us have perceived,



even though dimly and with an awful timidity, a profound truth. Modern man is indeed in headlong flight, but at least it is a flight from something real; his sense of the terrible impendingness of God is far closer to holy awe than the complacent feeling of intimacy which often infects a cosy Christianity. Though he shrinks from it, dreads it, and withdraws his will from it, he confesses by his very fear that he is aware of the disturbing and dislocating majesty of God. If God be, indeed, the highest good, the supreme reality, as the Church he avoids

has always proclaimed, then He is what Charles Williams calls a "terrible good." It is no phantom, no psychological "escape mechanism," no vague, abstract ideal of "the best that has been thought and said," that so shakes and sends man to his natural refuges. Rather it is the indistinct awareness of the irrevocable consequences of God's love. With God the Judge there might be some hope of appeasement. From God the Omnipotent there might be some escape, even the final escape of utter death, if only the soul's immortality might be an illusion. With God, the source of Power, there might be (as so much Christianity of the Lloyd Douglas type has dared to suggest) some hope of plugging in on the circuit and making use of deity. But what of God the Lover? Man's real terror is a terror at the nakedness of Divine Love, of a God who loves so absolutely that His Body is stripped and revealed shamelessly upon the Cross, and whose heart is torn open by the thrust of the lance until it pours forth the last drop of its blood for the Beloved? To be loved by such a God means an answering nakedness in the soul itself, the sacrifice of all its reticences, the stripping of all its defenses and disguises. It will involve being known with an absolute clarity and in an absolute detail,

that will be proportionate to the self revelation of God Himself in the helplessness of the infant Christ and the anguished face of the Man on the Cross. The fearful self very fear acknowledges as did never the complacency of the righteous that it is sacrificed of a love that knows no half-measures. In every other love the pride of life glean some shred of merit, some hope of paying back, some valid conviction of equality with the beloved. In human love, failure in loving is somewhat balanced by the failure of being loved, benefits received are balanced by benefits bestowed. One is, in a measure, loved for one's weaknesses and excused for one's faults. Reticence, reservations, timidity are accepted and condoned by the answering fear, the answering desire for half-love in the hearts of those we cherish. For human love, at its best, apart from Divine Love, is a game of hide-and-seek and the aim is to get "home free," the loving places undiscovered, though the game is shared. The heart of man is unprepared for absolute faithfulness even to death; it is unprepared for absolute self-sacrifice; it is unprepared for absolute candor, even to the costly acceptance of self-knowledge. To the natural man the love of God is, as George MacDonald says, "inexorable." Divine charity is, as poets knew a "Lord of terrible countenance." What natural man has dimly apprehended and firmly circumvented in human love cannot escape if he is to receive the love of God. For love is not a tool or an instrument to pleasure or self-indulgence; it is a cure for feelings of inferiority or a compensation for natural losses. It is as Christ showed in His Person "LORD and MASTER." The answer to His love is an entrance into the very self-emptying, the abandonment to the will and purposes of God. Another that brought perfect Love from the glory of the Father's face to the straw, the manger, the wilderness, the cross and the tomb. There is no place to stop, for the love of God has begun, for love has its terrible consequence of sanctity. It will free man free, but it will first free him of all deception. For the love of God is a jealous love, jealous not so much of man's other human loves, which are the very work



MADONNA AND CHILD
By Donatello

trity, but jealous of the secret places of the heart. Is it any wonder that the soul, of the coldness of reserve and self-withholding, accustomed to its meager ration of half-sharing, the dead, hard determination to "be beholden to nobody" should fear enormous, and as M. Menasce says, so unplaceable a love? The very fidelity of God's love smites man as he was never bitten by man's infidelity. God's bounty comes him as he was never shamed by the lights and snubs of human friends. He knows that the final humiliation is not unrequited love; it is love itself. The beginning of humility is not that no one could love us, so full as we are, but that God does love us, despite what we are. Man's first fearful cry, born of reticence and shyness, "Lord, how can I bear to be loved by You?" becomes the cry of a self-knowledge learned at the foot of the Cross "Lord, how can you bear to love me?"

The Incarnation is God's answer. Man's fear is groundless. The Incarnate life of Christ in history, and the sacramental life of Christ in the Church and in the soul is a life of courtship, rather than of force. Man is afraid; he must be gradually wooed and reclaimed. He is unable to bear sudden union or the finished gift of perfection. His fear is accepted and gently cured; the frightened soul, damaged by long acquaintance with sin, and blind even to itself must be led in union with God at its own pace. The grace of the Sacraments will begin, sustain and finally perfect a life, with the same gradualness with which Our Lord's own incarnate life unfolded in time and among men. The soul's fears are not to be brashly overridden; the lack of self-knowledge will not be led with a blinding flash of clarity that would reduce it to a despair and self-disgust that could not endure. The voice of Christ will speak always to the timid soul as it spoke to the timid disciples, "I have many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now." He would come as a baby, small, helpless, dependent for everything upon His mother and foster-father and He would grow into the measure of the Cross; His incarnate life would begin in the undirected motions of an infant's hands and would grow to the skilled



ST. NICHOLAS AND THE CHILDREN
Flemish Woodcarving

(Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art)

actions of the carpenter's shop and then to the mysterious actions of healing, feeding and raising the dead. His sacramental life would be the same. Nothing would be done suddenly by force; nowhere would the soul be overwhelmed or confounded. He would everywhere await our will and our consent, even as He waits daylong and nightlong on altars where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved for someone—or no one—to come into His Presence. Dame Julian calls Him over and over "our courteous Lord." Everything is offered; nothing is demanded by force. He will win us from all our reticences, but He will never over-ride them. He will not overwhelm us with ecstasies for which we are not ready, nor give us more of Himself than in our deepest intention we really desire. He may long to give us more than we are willing to receive. He may thirst for our refreshment as we do not thirst for Him, and hunger for our true

satisfaction as we do not hunger for His will. But our fears that He will take us by storm are groundless. He waited to be the twelve-year old boy in the temple with some insight into His mission until He had been the alien infant in Egypt. He waited for His ministry until He had been subject in Nazareth. He waited for the Cross though He cried, "How am I straitened until it be accomplished." Stretched upon that cross, He waited through six hours of agony for the consummation; He waited in the tomb for the Resurrection and He waited forty days for the Ascension. He has waited two thousand years for the perfection of His Bride, the Church, and the healing of the wounds of schism. He waits for us—faithfully, courteously, unshakably. In the sacramental life, He awaits the perfection of each beloved, through many communions. To babes who cannot yet receive the suffering of His Cross, He comes as an infant, requiring little, yet receiving all that is done and all that is given for His sake, however simple, however small. He will accept our first blind, confused confessions, and forgive us all those sins "which we cannot now remember" or which in our unfamiliarity with self and with Him, we do not know how to perceive, if only we have confessed bravely and honestly what we do know and understand. He will withhold from us at times that fuller knowledge which we could not yet bear. The whole meaning of the Incarnation is a rejection of suddenness. It is the way of growth, of development, of unfolding. For in the Incarnation, God for a time became adjusted to the restrictions of human life that man, also in time, might become adjusted to the free-

dom of Divine Love. Our fears of sanctity are groundless; our fears of Him is groundless. The angel commanded the shepherds, the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, "Fear not." There was glory in the heavens, but what they would see was a baby. The wise men received, so far as we know, no such command, and perhaps they did not need it, whatever else they were, they were wise. Wisdom, perhaps they already knew, but such as could be withheld from the prudent, the careful, the fearful, but could proceed out of the mouth of babes. So they came, all who heeded the angelic command, not to inherit the beatific vision, which was the end and goal, but to adore at the manger. Divine Love made little for the fears and timorities of man.

The nativity is then God's answer to man's flight from Him. Because of sin man cannot and because of the fear born of sin he dare not come to God. Well, then, God will come and dwell with man. But our preparation for His Nativity is the angelic command of Advent, spoken to all who are chosen. He has chosen to have a part in His entrance into the world. We of His Body, the Church, are already chosen; to us the angel directly speaks. Like the shepherds we must forget our fears and rouse from our astonishment, lay aside all our secret little reservations, our half-hearted attempts to be "moderately religious," our anxiety as to what may happen if we open our hidden lives to Him. We must even leave the sheep to take care of themselves for a bit, forget our crushing anxiety about our work, our careers, our station in life, the driving sense of duty—all of it—and "go at once" to Bethlehem. Like St. Joseph we must proffer our reputation and our good name; we must face and accept the world's tendency to put the worst possible interpretation even on holy things and give our open loyalty to what Charles Williams called the "scandal of Christianity," the rational, disreputable doctrine of the Virgin Birth. Hardest of all, like the Blessed Mother, in spite of our knowledge of our complete unworthiness, with no pretense of merit or deserving, we must be bold to receive with





THE MADONNA OF HUMILITY

By Fra Angelico

(Courtesy of the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.)

[Mellon Collection]

our very souls and bodies, not a symbol,
but the living Person of Christ.

What He then speaks in quietness and
silence to the soul that receives Him casts
out all fear. He utters within the interior
clamor a stillness that quiets all tremors and
ushes all speech, but perhaps we might
translate it as something like this:

'Fear not, for it is *you* I love: not just
mankind, but you, John, Mary, Peter, Mar-
na, Philip; not your manners, your customs
or your accomplishments; not your income
group, your social status, your profession
or your race. But you. My Father made

you for one single purpose: to love Him; to
love Him in your way, not someone else's,
to serve Him with your gifts and your joys
and your sufferings; to grow into an image
of Him that will never be duplicated in all
the length and breadth of His creation. I
have come to bring you out of a dark bond-
age to a thousand masters into a place of
liberty. What your heart has longed for,
you have not dared to take. If you will keep
on looking at Me, you will dare to open up
your hand and receive it. Those dull rubbing
shackles you pretend to like and inwardly
resent, I will strike off, if you will let me.

As I was stripped of my garments, I will strip you of all your defenses and disguises. All the amusements that have not amused for a long time, the jokes you laugh at nervously to be one of the crowd and that secretly make you ashamed, the meaningless things you go on doing because you dare not let go of them for fear of the world, the frantic routine that drives you in a helpless frenzy and destroys your family's peace of mind and makes you a sour drudge and a self-made martyr to your own self-esteem, your belligerent good works that make others uncomfortable—these are your real chains, and I have come to set you free to seek the hidden image of My Father that alone is you.

As my Father has loved you, so you must love Me—as a person. I was born as a baby and my mother loved me as a woman loves her child, My disciples loved me as a pupil loves a teacher and as an apprentice loves his master and as a slave loves his lord. I was loved by St. John as a man loves his friend, and I am loved by my Church as a husband loves His bride, faithfully, creatively, fruitfully. In all these ways you may love me, yet not as a god among your other gods, or an ideal among your other ideals, but as a person. If I come in to you in the Mass of Christmas, nothing will ever be the same again, for that is the essence of persons. Nothing is ever the same for a woman who bears a child, or a husband who marries a wife or a man who makes a friend. To the coward, persons are frightening. But persons and God, the Person of Persons, are the only things that are going to last forever. If you will receive Me, I will teach you to love Me, and My Father in Me and all men in us. I will alter every pleasure, but I will give you joy. I will change and transform every natural affection, but I will give you charity; I will strip you of all pride and self-satisfaction, but I will give you the robe of righteousness and redemption. Nothing will ever be the same, for behold, I make all things new. Are you afraid?

And the soul that is honest looks within herself and knows the falseness and blindness of all her fears, and answers truthfully,

“Yes, Lord, I am afraid. Of myself I do nothing.”

And to that the Love of Christ replies: “Then I will come in and dwell with you for I am Immanuel. I will change even the sinful fear and make it holy awe. I will change the fear of Me into the fear of losing Me. I will change the fear of my dazzling light into the fear of sin and darkness. I will take away your natural fears and give you supernatural hope. You will pass through wars and pain, and spiritual darkness, the treachery of friends, the failure of your self-willed schemes and plans, and this will be to you the bearing and the sharing of my Cross, and even in the midst of them you will feel a holy joy. Where you once pride was afraid of the judgment of men, you will fear only the sorrow of God. Where you were terrified to let me in, you will fear only to let me go. If the world hate you, I will give you communion with my saints and surround you with a blazing cloud of witnesses. For anything that I take away from you I will give you more of myself. All that was good, all that was holy, I will restore to you a thousandfold, made clean and whole. Every good natural affection for child or parent, husband or friend I will rinse and make love in the waters of charity. All the good things of my Father's creation—every loveliness of nature, every soaring beauty of poem or song, the very homeliness of the loaf in the oven and the food in the kitchen—these you will be free to praise and enjoy, because you do not depend on them any more. For I am not a destroyer, but a Saviour, the cleanser and redeemer of My Father's world. I will be meek and learn of Me, and thou shalt inherit the earth.”

And the soul answers, as St. Augustine and the Blessed Virgin answered,

“Yes, Lord. Give what Thou commandest and command what Thou wilt. Be it unto me according to Thy word.”

In every soul that so answers, Peter the Love casts out fear, again Christ comes into the world through the open gate of a human being, and it is the season of the Nativity again.

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Sunday Morning Worship and Daily Morning Prayer

BY EDWARD N. PERKINS

IN the Anglican Communion it is very generally believed and practiced, that the precept that it is one's duty to worship God in His Church every Sunday (B. C. P., 291) is complied with by attending a reading of the office of Daily Morning Prayer (for "Daily" see B. C. P., p. 3) followed by a sermon. Other branches of the Holy Catholic Church think otherwise, believing that Eucharistic worship is meant. The Roman Catholic will say he is to "hear Mass" every Sunday, the Orthodox that he is to be present at the Holy Liturgy.

Recently quite a flurry was created by the discontinuance in a certain cathedral church of the long-established Sunday practice of the eleven o'clock office of Daily Morning Prayer followed by a sermon, in favor of a celebration of the Holy Communion (the Mass of the Roman Catholic and the Holy Liturgy of the Orthodox) with a sermon read before the Offertory, as authorized by the rubric (B. C. P., p. 71). At the cathedral of an adjacent diocese that already had been the practice for years, as it has in many parish churches.

The practice of the Episcopal Church is divided, and this difference amongst ourselves is coming to be more widely noticed. It is something which Episcopalians should be thinking about. Uniformity of practice arrived at through common understanding is a state which we should hope for.

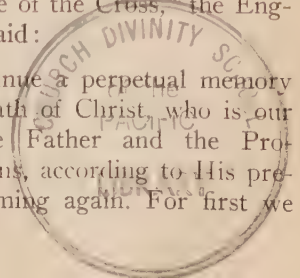
Those who disapprove of the Sunday morning practice of Daily Morning Prayer and sermon, do so not because of what is done, but of what is not done. They are happy to have as many as will, attend the Daily Morning Prayer every Sunday. Their objection is to *not* attending a celebration of the Holy Eucharist every Sunday. Those of the opposite way of thinking claim that this relative neglect of the Eucharist is right and preferable.

One thing perhaps may be very generally agreed upon, and that is that many Episcopalians have only the vaguest idea of what the liturgy of the Holy Communion is all about. And how is one in such a state to form a worth-while opinion about anything relating to the service? As a test, to how many Episcopalians does the expression "Eucharistic Sacrifice" mean anything in particular? Or: What is the significance of the word "Eucharist?" The clergy all too often assure their people that the Holy Communion is "The great central act of Christian worship," without making the least attempt to tell them how or why or even acting as if they believed it themselves. One consequence is that many Episcopalians have the idea that there is nothing for them to do at a celebration of the Holy Communion unless they intend to receive the Sacrament. Yet there is much for them to do.

The Liturgical Commission of the Episcopal Church has put forward a tentative revision of the Holy Communion, proposing, among other things, to give the service this title: "Celebration of the Holy Eucharist and Administration of the Holy Communion," thus by naming Eucharist curing the defect of the present title which seems to say that Communion is all. Yet there is still more besides Communion than Eucharist. There is sacrifice.

In their reply to the denial on the part of Pope Leo XIII of the validity of the Anglican orders, which had charged that the Holy Communion is a "nude commemoration of the Sacrifice of the Cross," the English Archbishops said:

" . . . We continue a perpetual memory of the precious death of Christ, who is our advocate with the Father and the Propitiation for our sins, according to His precept, until His coming again. For first we



offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; then next we plead and represent before the Father the Sacrifice of the Cross, and by it we confidently entreat remission of sins and all other benefits of the Lord's Passion for the whole Church; and lastly we offer the sacrifice of ourselves to the Creator of all things which we have already signified by the oblations of His creatures. This whole action, in which the people has necessarily to take its part with the Priest, we are accustomed to call the Eucharistic Sacrifice."

In the same document the Archbishops speak of "the relation which unites the sacrifice of the eternal Priest and the sacrifice of the Church, which in some way certainly are one."

One should disabuse one's mind of some common misunderstandings about sacrifice. Connotations which have clustered about the word grow out of the practice both of the Jews and of the pagans in ancient times to offer living creatures on the altar, taking their lives, to say nothing of the human sacrifices of the pagans of Asia. It is an easy but wrong inference that such immolation is of the essence of sacrifice. This confusion, carried over mentally into the idea of our Lord's self-offering at Calvary, sets up a repulsion against sacrifice in connection with the Holy Communion.

"Sacrifice" is *sacer + facere*, to make sacred. Whatever is offered to and accepted by God is a sacrifice. In the old Mediterranean world sacrifices of first fruits were familiar, and even of flowers. The altar is the place of sacrifice and whatever is formally offered to God is brought to the altar, a sacrifice.

The Eucharist is a great dramatic act of praise and thanksgiving and of sacrifice centering on our Lord's sacrificial life and His final self-offering at Calvary and culminating in the act of Holy Communion. Eucharist is thanksgiving. The Eucharist is characterized by praise and thanksgiving, and so the Eucharistic Sacrifice is a "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" (B. C. P., p. 81). In the celebration of the Holy Communion, at the Offertory, the bread and

wine, our gifts which are to be consecrated to be the Body and Blood of Christ, are first offered to God (B. C. P., p. 73 rubric). Then at the Consecration the sacramental Body and Blood are offered ("these thy holy gifts which we now offer unto thee" B. C. P., p. 80) thus in this memorial representing to the Father the Sacrifice at Calvary offered once for all on the Cross and pleading its merits. Throughout we offer our prayers and praise, and our thanksgivings. We offer also ourselves, our souls and bodies, unworthy as we are, to be a sacrifice to almighty God, through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ (B. C. P., p. 81.) In all this we are alert to assign all glory to almighty God who gave His only Son to suffer death upon the Cross, "what was made there by his one oblation of himself once offered a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world," and in contrition and self-surrender, and in thankfulness, we recall in dramatic reenactment His institution of the Blessed Sacrament in the night in which He was betrayed (B. C. P., p. 80).

It is submitted that anyone who will attend and follow carefully a celebration of the Holy Communion and keep his mind alert to all these things will find plenty to do there apart from the act of communion, far more indeed, than the office of Daily Morning Prayer affords. Attendance at the Holy Communion is worship at its highest, the offering to the Father of the perfect offering of the Son. In the familiar words of the hymn (189): "... having with us him who pleads above, we here present, we here spread forth to thee the only offering perfect in thine eyes, the one true, pure, immortal sacrifice."

It is the teaching of the Church that the Lord is present on His altar in the Holy Communion. Those many Episcopalians who on "Communion Sunday" get up and leave at the Offertory, seem to be walking out on our Lord just as He is about to come. Should they not await the Lord's coming on their knees? And what of those who remain half squatted on their haunches, with knees too stiff to bend for Him at whom



NATIVITY FIGURES

By Rossellino

(Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art)

ame every knee should bow, or so St. Paul thought? There is plenty to do apart from the act of Communion, if one will do it.

The offices of Daily Morning Prayer (B. C. P., p. 3) and Daily Evening Prayer (B. C. P., p. 21), represent the Divine Office of daily praise and thanksgiving and are supposed to be said in the churches daily, weekdays and Sundays, whether there is a congregation of one or more, or not. It is easy to prove by the Prayer Book that it contemplates that the Holy Communion is to be the Sunday service regularly attended by everybody. And this sets one to wondering how it came about that in practice the Eucharist has been so widely displaced as the generally attended Sunday service, by Daily Morning Prayer.

Perhaps it is quite generally assumed that this displacement is one of the purposeful changes of the Reformation. But that is not the case. The displacement came not by

design, but through the accidental combination of circumstances. The division in practice developed when, in consequence of the Oxford Movement, a process of replacement began.

The displacement of the Eucharist as the universally attended Sunday service grew out of a rubric in the English Prayer Book forbidding consecration unless there were to be three or more communicants who had given their names in to the priest by the previous evening. Some very general account of this matter is given in *The Worship of the Church* prepared, and published in 1952 by The Seabury Press, Inc., under the direction of the National Council of the Episcopal Church (See pp. 147-149). In the late Middle Age lay communions were few and far between both on the Continent of Europe and in England, and most celebrations were completed with the priest also communicating. Either this communion of the priest alone was regarded as in itself objectionable,

or it was thought that if it were forbidden an effort would be made and more communicants led to be prepared. In either case, communicants did not come forward, and the result was to prevent the priest from proceeding beyond the part of the service called "Ante-communion," except on great feast days when enough communicants were on hand.

In consequence of this prohibiting rubric, the Anglican order of Sunday Service came to be Daily Morning Prayer, the Litany, and "Ante Communion" with a sermon. In the course of time this was abbreviated to Daily Morning Prayer and sermon. Thus by that rubric the Eucharist was unintentionally displaced as the universally attended Sunday service, a result which nobody desired (For a detailed account of this, see *Sunday Morning—Which Service?*, a tract by the Rev. Dr. N. P. Williams, late of Oxford, published by the S. P. C. K. Cir. 1943).

Those intent on restoring the Eucharist to its lost position perhaps would say, if asked for their reason, that it is indeed the great act of worship, the memorial of the Lord's passion and death and resurrection, the representation to the Father of Christ's atoning Sacrifice and His perpetual intercession for us sinners, the service in which He is indeed spiritually present, and the Sacrament of His Body and Blood; and furthermore that to attend it every Sunday at least whether receiving the Sacrament or not is no mere Roman precept, but incontrovertibly the practice and precept of the whole Church from the beginning.

Grounds for objecting to the restoration of the Eucharist are less easy to state. Most people are strongly averse to alteration of settled habits in such matters as religious observance. There may also be some prejudice resulting from the inveterate habit

in some quarters of misrepresenting "High Church" or "Anglo-Catholic." There may be some who dislike to be confronted by conviction of sin or call to humility, and some perhaps who wish to approximate as near as may be Protestant ways, in the hope that the Episcopal Church may one day give itself over to some Protestant sect or other. Probably mere adherence to settled habits, a strong motive, is the main reason, together with quite general lack of understanding of the Holy Eucharist as a service of worship, praise, thanksgiving and self-surrender.

The division in our Church with respect to this most important matter of practice is worse than merely deplorable. What every Episcopalian can do is to try to inform himself, as by studying *The Worship of the Church* cited above, and to think it out in his own mind as open-mindedly as he can contrive to do, seeking the truth.

The scheme of parish worship contemplated by the Prayer Book is summarized thus in *The Worship of the Church* (1914, 149, 150):

" . . . This would entail Morning and Evening Prayer daily, including Sunday; frequent use of the Litany, and a celebration of the Holy Communion, with proper preparation for it, at least every Sunday and holy day, not merely as an 'extra' service, but as part of the regular corporate life of the whole parish. Such a discipline of worship would not mean necessarily that every person would make his or her communion at every celebration. . . . "

For fifteen hundred years at least no such thing existed in the Christian world as generally attended Sunday service other than the Holy Eucharist. This never meant that everyone present is to receive the Sacrament. That is for those who are prepared and desirous. Those not prepared, or not desirous to receive, remain in their place. They have come to offer their prayers and thanksgiving and to take their part as members of the body in the Sacrifice of the Church, which, as the Archbishops say, their reply to Pope Leo, is in some way certainly one with the Sacrifice of the eternal Priest.



The Bolahun Record

BY JOSEPH PARSELL, O.H.C.

THE year we are just completing has been one of adjustment to new conditions in our Liberian Mission. It has also been one of a few *firsts*,—a sign of development and growth.

In the first place, we have lost two of our old friends. Clan Chief Vaani Sodu of the northwestern Kisi clan died early in the year. He had long been our friend and at the time we had a station in his town. But we were not able to continue with a regular catechist there. Now the problem of the place to send another catechist arises for where the new clan chief will make his capital affects the placement of a catechist in the clan. We have some Kisi prospects as catechists, and in due time some new catechists may be trained for the work in the Kisi country beyond our present reaches.

The second of our friends to have died is Clan Chief Momo Hina of our local Watomoma area. Years ago Momo Hina worked for the Mission as a labourer. Later he became an assistant chief and finally clan chief. He has held a position of authority in our area for nearly twenty years. For some of that time he was trying to become a Mohammedan, but as a result of the great 'leopard medicine' trial of 1948 he returned from Monrovia with a determination to pray in the Christian way. He became very faithful in attendance on Sundays to the hearers' preaching or to Low Mass when he had to go off on business. However, he was not able to separate from his thirty wives, most of whom were alliances with local potentates, so that he could not go on to the catechumenate. He died while the Fathers were in their long retreat. However, he was one of those with the right intention whom we trust God will reward. At the time of writing we do not know who his successor is, if chosen.

Changes in the economy of the country are affecting us greatly. For example, the supply of rice is much curtailed for school

purposes. In former times we were able to buy rice from the chiefs who had big farms made for them as part of the payment for their services of maintaining order and dispensing justice. Today the farms for the chiefs have been cut down greatly and other compensation is being supplied to them. However, for us it means that there is no longer an available supply of rice for our schools. This has been particularly true since the death of Woiwo Jala of Kpangbalamai who supplied us with rice year in and year out.

In this past year the schools at Bolahun were delayed in opening at mid-term due to the lack of rice. The situation will probably deteriorate rather than get better. With hoe and cutlass an African is barely able to supply the need of his own household for rice for a whole year. As the country is too hilly for mechanized farming, we shall be greatly exercised to find a way to get sufficient grain for our schools. Probably a greater emphasis on day school education will be necessary, which will not be a bad thing in the long run.

II

Among the *firsts* of this 1953 we are expecting the graduation of our first Bolahun student at Cuttington College. Peter Vaani Konneh finishes his course at the end of November. We are hoping that he will return to Bolahun next year and teach in the high school.

Then we anticipate that the first girl graduate of our high school will have completed her course. This is Agnes Waata. She will be one of the three of this year's graduating class. It is a remarkable achievement for which the Sisters can be duly proud that they have nurtured one of their girls through to the end of the high school course.

To climax his year at Bolahun on this tour Brother Sydney Atkinson was made priest by Bishop Percy Jones, the suffragan of Sierra Leone. This was our first ordination since 1944 when Bishop Kroll or-

dained the Reverend Charles Matlock in St. Mary's Church.

III

In the last few years the desires of the people for education and for the Christian way have brought us the opportunity to expand in all directions from Bolahun. The outstations now need more supervision, and the schools need more housing which involves building continuously. To relieve the pressure on the Fathers and Sisters and to meet these increased needs, we determined to try to send new technical helpers from the States who could assist the Fathers, Sisters and the doctor. Our efforts have been successful in finding the personnel and the response to the special appeal has brought in sufficient funds to send out those most needed at this time.

The new workers seem to have found Bolahun all we told them it would be and more. To quote one, 'Bolahun is everything you said it would be. It is wonderful. Every minute of every day brings something new.'

As the year ends there are four members of the Order on the Mission, two secular priests, one of whom is also a doctor, three sisters, the doctor and his wife and children, a technician and a secretary. In addition there are a teacher and a mechanic arriving about Christmas time. Two more Sisters are expected after the New Year. With this

staff we shall be able to meet the needs of the work.

IV

Under Fr. Taylor's guidance the changing spiritual needs have been given considerable thought and attempts are being made to meet them.

At the convent a new Sister Superior has been appointed,—Sister Mary Teresa. Sister Susanna and Sister Mary Ella have returned to England. The former has completed some fifteen years at the Mission the last tour as Superior.

Despite changes in staff the regular religious life of the monastery and convent goes forward, and the religious life of the Mission continues without any perceptible change. This is one of the great stabilizing influences which a Religious community brings to Mission work.

V

The new year will bring some problems of its own. The Beasleys will be leaving in March, having completed more than three years of tour. We shall need a surgeon to take Mr. Beasley's place. Pray for the finding of the right person. In so many ways the Beasleys will be irreplaceable in their enthusiasm, interest and consecration to the work. However, we know our Lord will send us others to carry on what they have begun.

1954 will also bring a great increase in the number of students eligible for the fifth grade. This is the result of the expansion of the schools some years ago. Entrance into the fifth grade means coming from an outstation school or from St. Agnes' school and taking an examination for admission to St. Philip's School at Bolahun,—the school which takes the boys from the fifth to the eighth grade inclusive. Despite the increase in school population, the dormitories built in 1936 have housed the boys at Bolahun, and we expect that this will no longer be the case in the coming year.

There will also be an increase in the number of girls in the high school. Hence we are taking care of this growth by supplying a new teacher for the high school.

We are greatly blessed in that there is no civil strife in our area. The temptations



THE BEASLEY CHILDREN

trials are those common to man anywhere. Though some of these loom large on the horizon, the grace of God will be sufficient for us to bring forth a good fruit.

We also have the hope that in the Bandi country north and east of the Mission we will have the first baptisms. These will be the result of work begun there in 1948-49 by Father Milligan and continued by the Fathers and Sisters.

Pray that as the hundreds of visitors come to the Mission to keep the Christmas fast the light of the Saviour may shine in their hearts and bring them to himself.

MOHAMMEDANS DISPLAY THEIR ROSARIES



Kings and Priests

BY CHRISTINE FLEMING HEFFNER

FROM Her earliest days, the Church has considered Herself to be the fulfillment of the calling and the prophecy of the Old Israel: the holy nation chosen of God for the working of His will for His world, the instrument for the bringing about of His purpose for all men. She has indeed solemnly borne the title and the responsibility of being the spiritual event of which the ancient Israel was the shadow cast before. And it is the Church, in a true and final sense, which is called of God to be the peculiar people, the nation of kings and priests.

In the day of Her tribulations, She was deeply sensible of this vocation, this status of being the fulfillment of the ancient promise. But in our day of Her taming to the society in which She lives, this solemn calling, this terrible responsibility lies oft forgotten.

And if it is remembered, it is thought of rather as the faded, poetic tatters of an archaic allegory, meaning little to us. Yet allegory is never language without meaning, but rather language imbued with a more profound meaning than its obvious import. And we are the same Church, not merely a descendant of that Church, that bore this definition. If this is allegory, then it has a deeper meaning, not a lesser one, than first

we think. A holy nation are we—chosen of God, a nation of kings and priests.

Nor can we pass up any uncomfortable implications of this startling statement by the thought that this refers only to the clergy. It is the whole nation that is chosen, set apart—it is a nation of kings and priests, not merely one containing them. That we have priests, in the classical sense, and that—to stretch a point, we have rulers (“rectors”) answers nothing of the indictment and implication inherent within these terms. As Christendom, the Church, as the New Israel it is we who are chosen by God Himself to be, all of us, kings and priests.

Priests are those who mediate between God and man. Where the “priesthood of the laity” has been the concern of the Church, it seems always to have been construed to mean the lack of need for mediation, rather than the position of each Christian as such a mediator. Yet that mediation is inherent in the very word *priesthood*, and so is the element of sacrifice, whether material or spiritual. Priests are those who do so mediate, and who have a part in the offering of sacrifice. If we then, all of us, are such priests, then we are chosen of God to mediate His Grace to all the world, chosen to take part

in the sacrifice offered for the sins of the world, chosen to be instruments of His salvation! Such is our position as Christians, and our Confirmation is indeed an ordination to the full carrying out of this vocation. And unless we are the willing instruments of His purpose for our neighbors, unless we do, in every opportunity presented us, bring men back to God, and bring God's love into the hearts of man, we are faithless priests, unprofitable servants. Unless we offer ourselves, our souls and bodies, into His hands, up to His purposes for us and for those around us, unless the sacrifice for the sins of all men which was made on Calvary is something we deliberately make our own and make known to others, then we are apostate priests.

As faithful priests we must be mediators, must allow God to use us to reveal Himself



to other men. When men see and love Him in us, who will not or cannot seek Him otherwise, we are become channels, bringing Grace to men and men's yearning to God. Every little bit of love thus brought into being is an offering to the Father that would not otherwise be. So it is we, as priests, who offer the sacrifice of love from men to God and who bring His love into their hearts and hands. If our Christianity omits this meaning and consists merely in the observance of rules of respectability, then we are exactly in the same category as those pharisees whom the Lord so scathingly denounced and promised eternal death.

And kings? We think little of kings these days. Kings have very nearly gone out of fashion. But at the time in our history when rulership was at its height of both power and glory, the highest title in all the armor of nomenclature surrounding rulership was "Defender of the Faith." It has an unresonant sound to us now, it seems to come to us only from the pages of tales of chivalry. In fact it was once a real title, and it still has a real meaning—one that, as the chosen people of God, we each of us bear. For now we know that not alone kings, but all Christians, must defend the Christian belief that struggles to be born, to grow, or to survive in the hearts of men, placed there by the Holy Ghost. More than the title, the duty is ours to be defenders of the faith in our time.

Whether we bear that title as empty words or as the actual description of a calling is up to each of us to decide. But, one way or the other, we bear it, we are chosen to be Defenders of the Faith.

Defenders of the faith that lives within our own hearts, defending it against the desires, the interests, the derision of the world about us. It isn't easy to be a real Christian though being a nominal one means merely going with the crowd. God by His Grace has placed within us this faith, the faith once delivered to the saints and ably defended by them that we might have it. How well do we defend this treasure for which they gave their lives, their suffering? Do we defend with the traditional weapons they have given us, the Holy Scriptures, the Sacraments?

ants, and prayer? Do we work at learning more about it, deepening our experience of it?

Defenders of the faith for the sake of those who are to come after, those members of the Universal Church who yet live in the limbo of time, awaiting their day and their title and their glory.

Defenders of the faith that struggles in the heart of each man we meet. How well we defend the faith that hides unseen at the other end of each conversation, each audience, each neighbor's knowledge of us? We bear the name, *Christian*—does our endorsement of that title wither the faith that could have desired the name, too? Who,

that we know, has judged the Christ by us, and rejected Him? Who among our acquaintances has listened to our voice for the echo of the blessing of God, and hearing it not, has gone on to false prophets and material gods?

Kings and priests—defenders of the faith, mediators of the Grace of God to all men, for all men, chosen by Him to bring ourselves and our brothers into the glory that is His purpose, the salvation for which He died, the life in Him.

The Church, a holy nation, the New Israel, fulfilled in you and me? Or just another human state, doomed to failure and destruction? Bewildered slaves of economic chaos, lost men—or kings, and priests?



THE VIRGIN ENTHRONED WITH SAINT CATHERINE AND SAINT BARBARA
By Memling

(Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Order of Saint Helena

Versailles

Here, in Versailles, the fall has gone rather quickly, with the new girls adjusting to boarding school life and all its problems. Some have never had to clean up their own rooms, or mop floors, others have always had all the candy and cookies they wanted, when they wanted. These are just some of the new ideas they have to get used to, along with the biggest of all—that of living with those who may be quite to themselves different in temperament, interests, background, and abilities.

The statue of our Lady and the holy Child which was commissioned as a memorial to our late Assistant Principal, Emily Toll Hopkins, was blessed in a perfect downpour one Saturday afternoon—the only rain we had had for a month or so before, and the only one since. It was a lovely service, despite the rain, and we were happy to have Mrs. Hopkins' two sisters, as well

as many friends, with us for the occasion.

Father Kroll was with us November 8, to give a Teaching Mission for the girls at the school. So many of them signed up for it that the gym had to be used for the service instead of our tiny chapel. The instructions were most helpful, and interest high.

Hockey practice has been in full swing with both school teams getting in private practices in preparation for the tournament. The faculty team had creaked and groaned through several practice periods in order to be in "fit" condition for the game with the children. The best that can be said was that it was a hard fought game on both sides with no major or permanent casualties, and the faculty was at least able to appear in classes the next day.

Thanksgiving day was an enjoyable one for all. Many of the children went out with their parents and friends for dinner, and those that remained at the school were treated to a roast turkey dinner, complete with all the trimmings including place cards and cranberry sauce.

Sister Rachel gave a Quiet Day at Philip's Church, Louisville, Ky., for the Diocesan Woman's Auxiliary, and Sister Frances had a Quiet Day for the women at Christ Church, Richmond, Ky.

The 23rd of October we had a visit from the Rt. Rev. Egmont M. Krischke, Bishop of Southwestern Brazil, and Deacon Marian Brown, of Fort Defiance, Arizona.

Christmas carols are already ringing through the air as the chorus begins practicing of the annual Christmas pageant. Needless to say, the Christmas vacation is being rather eagerly awaited.

We have much to be thankful for—a new school, waiting list, and a splendid staff of faculty and staff. One of our new faculty members is a Ph.D. in Church History, who is teaching two classes, at the Episcopal Theological Seminary in Lexington, Virginia, Ecclesiastical History. Our new Chaplain, the Rev. Alan R. McKinley, has started a weekly bulletin of chapel services and instructions.





DEDICATION MASS—CONVENT OF SAINT HELENA

as, which the children have found interesting and helpful. We ask you to give thanks with us for all that God has given us; His guidance and His love.

Newburgh Notes

The event that loomed largest on our October Newburgh calendar was Dedication Day on the 2nd. We were sorry that our Sisters, Associates, families, and friends could not be with us then for the blessing of the convent and the Solemn High Mass, but we had a large "congregation," nevertheless. It was a perfect day, from beginning to end. The official beginning was 10:20, when the procession, headed by the Lucifer, Father Bicknell, formed outside the front entrance of the convent. Promptly at 10:30 Bishop Donegan began the Blessing. We proceeded to the Chapel and then to the library, reception room and office, through the back hall and across the lawn to the guest

house, back to kitchen and refectory, upstairs to the professed common room, to a cell, to the novitiate common room, back down the front stairs and around the house to the terrace, where the Mass began within a few minutes. The porch served ideally as chancel. We improvised an altar, and borrowed a lovely gold frontal and six tall brass candlesticks from St. George's, Newburgh. Behind it hung a monk's cloth dossal with the Derujinski crucifix (given us by our Associate, Father Ronald Latimer), and yellow and white chrysanthemums with autumn leaves were placed on either side. Bishop Donegan's throne was in the recess formed by the French doors on the west side. Opposite him was Father Superior, with Father Raynes, Superior of the English Community of the Resurrection on his left. Father Carruthers, rector of St. George's, acted as Chaplain to Bishop Donegan. Father Kroll celebrated, with Father

Parsell as Deacon and Brother James as Subdeacon. Brother Benedict was thurifer. The Sisters occupied benches set choir-wise, and were delighted to have four Sisters of St. Margaret join in. Since Sisters Ignatia and Mary Teresa were with us from Versailles, our choir ranks were swelled to seventeen. More than one hundred chairs were set up on the flagstone terrace for guests. The first row was occupied by the following members of O.H.C.: Fathers Harrison, Parker, Adams, Gunn (who was master of ceremonies for the guests in the procession), Bicknell, Brother George, and Scott Satterfield, Postulant. After the service, luncheon was served on the terrace. We were all filled with joy and thanksgiving for this day on which our new home officially became a convent.

Another joyous occasion was the consecration of our Chapel Altar and Sister Louise's junior profession on October 12th, at which our Superior, Bishop Campbell, officiated, assisted by Father Kroll and served by Brother Francis. The next day Postulant Marilyn Snediker was "clothed" as a novice, and became Sister Mary Elizabeth.

In order to give parishes in the vicinity a little taste of convent life, and to enable us to become acquainted with them, we have been inviting at least one each Sunday to tea, Vespers, and Benediction. The re-

sponse has been overwhelming, thanks to God! Among the parishes that have attended are St. George's, and Good Shepherd, Newburgh, St. Thomas, New Windsor; St. Ignatius', New York City; Holy Trinity, Hicksville, Long Island, St. Andrew's, Beacon; St. Paul's Chester; and John's, Cornwall. Several others have asked to be included in our schedule, and we hope more parishes will follow suit. According to our guest book, we've had approximately four hundred visitors since Moving Day, June 29th.

On November 18, Sister Josephine conducted a Quiet Day for women of the Diocese of South Carolina at Trinity Church, Pinopolis, S. C.

Notes

Father Superior made a visitation to the Convent of Saint Helena and Margaret School, in Versailles, Kentucky. Following this he went to Saint Andrew's School, Tennessee, where the new wing to Saint David's dormitory was dedicated. Following the engagements, Father Superior came north and conducted a retreat for the Community of Saint Mary at their Peekskill convent. He attended the annual pre-Advent quiet conference of the Oblates of Mount Carmel which was held at Saint Clement Church, Philadelphia. On Thanksgiving



Bishop Campbell preached at the same time. In early December, Father Superior conducted a retreat for the members of the community of Saint Mary resident at the Women's hospital at Bayside, Long Island; he preached at Palenville, New York.

Father Kroll conducted a mission for the girls and staff of Margaret Hall School, Baines, Kentucky; and later in the month conducted another mission at Saint John's Church, North Haven, Connecticut.

Father Parsell left early in November on his extended visit, first going to the Chicago area and thence to Tennessee where he has a number of engagements to speak on the work of our Liberian Mission. Following a visit to Saint Andrew's School, he is bound for California, making stops on the way to spread the news about the Liberian Mission.

Father Hawkins spoke at the men's corporate Communion breakfast at Saint Andrew's Church, Yardley, Pennsylvania.

Father Bicknell assisted Father Packard in a mission which was preached at Grace Church, Mohawk, New York. After this he preached a mission at Saint Paul's Church, Winton, North Carolina.

Father Packard preached a mission at Grace Church, Mohawk, New York; then he went on to take another mission at Millersville, a mission of Grace Church. He spoke at a youth rally at Rutland, Vermont, and followed this with a mission at Saint Peter's Church, Geneva, New York.

Father Adams has been continuing his school of worship at the Cathedral of Saint John the Divine, New York City, on Mondays in November; he also held a school of prayer at Saint John's Church, Frostburg, Maryland, and preached at Saint Simon's Church, New Rochelle, New York.

Father Gunn conducted a mission at Saint David's Church, Glenview, Illinois.

Current Appointments

Father Superior will conduct the pre-Christmas retreat for the Order of Saint Helena at Newburgh on December 10; he will also hold a retreat for the Society of Saint John the Evangelist at Bracebridge, Canada, December 15-19.



Father Parsell will have a full schedule on the west coast, but will take time off for a visit to Mount Calvary Monastery and to his brother at Stockton, California.

Father Hawkins will give a quiet day on December 3 at Saint Luke's Church, Somers, New York.

Father Harris will conduct the annual Pre-Christmas retreat for the community at West Park, on December 21.

Father Packard will hold a retreat for the Sisters of the Church, Toronto, Canada, December 28-January 3.

Father Adams will conduct a quiet day for the Community of Saint John Baptist, Ralston, New Jersey, December 11.

Father Gunn will conduct a quiet day at the Church of Saint Mary the Virgin on December 12, and will preach the following day at the eleven o'clock Sunday Mass.



Solemn Vespers, Holy Cross Monastery

An Ordo of Worship and Intercession Dec. 1953-Jan. 1954

Ember Wednesday V Proper Mass col 2) Advent i 3) of St Mary—for the increase of the ministry

Thursday V Mass of Advent iii col 2) Advent i 3) of St Mary—for the Order of Saint Helena

Ember Friday V Mass as on December 16—for Christian reunion

Ember Saturday V Mass a) of Ember Day col 2) Vigil of St Thomas 3) Advent i LG Vigil of b) of the Virgin col 2) Ember Day 3) Advent i LG Ember Day—for vestrymen

4th Sunday in Advent Semidouble V col 2) Advent i 3) of St Mary cr pref of Trinity—for the conversion of sinners

St Thomas Ap Double II Cl R gl col 2) Advent i cr pref of Apostles—for all in doubt and perplexity

Tuesday V Mass of Advent iv col 2) Advent i 3) of St Mary—for the persecuted

Wednesday V Mass as on December 22—for Saint Andrew's School

Christmas Eve V col 2) Advent i—for the spirit of humility

Christmas Day Double I Cl W gl cr pref of Christmas till Epiphany unless otherwise directed in third Mass LG of Epiphany—thanksgiving for the Incarnation

St Stephen M Double II Cl R gl col 2) Christmas cr—for deacons

St John Ap Ev Double II Cl W gl col 2) Christmas cr—for the Society of Saint John the Evangelist

Holy Innocents MM Double II Cl V col 2) Christmas cr—for children in institutions

St Thomas of Canterbury BM Double R gl col 2) Christmas cr—for the Priests Associate

Within the Octave Semidouble W Mass of 1st Sunday after Christmas gl col 2) Christmas cr—for the Seminarists Associate

St Sylvester BC Double W gl col 2) Christmas cr—for the bishops of the Church

January 1 Circumcision of Christ Double II Cl W gl col 2) Christmas cr—for renewed dedication to God

Octave of St Stephen Simple R gl col 2) of St Mary 3) for the Church or Bishop—for the Holy Cross Press

2nd Sunday after Christmas Semidouble W gl col 2) St John 3) of St Mary cr—for the rural work of the Church

Octave of Holy Innocents Simple R gl col 2) of St Mary 3) for the Church or Bishop—for the Companions of the Order of the Holy Cross

Eve of the Epiphany Semidouble W gl col 2) of St Mary 3) for the Church or Bishop cr—for religious education

Epiphany Double I Cl W gl cr pref of Epiphany through the Octave—for the Liberian Mission

Within the Octave Semidouble W gl col 2) of St Mary 3) for the Church or Bishop cr—for Mount Calvary Monastery

Within the Octave Semidouble W gl Mass as on January 7—for the American Church Union

Within the Octave Semidouble W Mass as on January 7—for the Confraternity of the Christian Life

1st Sunday after Epiphany Semidouble W gl col 2) Epiphany 3) St Paul the First Hermit C cr for Christian family life

Within the Octave Semidouble W Mass as on January 7—for the Oblates of Mount Calvary

Within the Octave Semidouble W Mass as on January 7—for the Confraternity of the Love of God

Octave of the Epiphany Gr Double W gl cr—for the peace of the world

St Hilary BCD Double W gl cr—for Church theologians

St Maurus Ab Simple W gl col 2) of St. Mary 3) for the Church or Bishop—for vocations to the religious life

Of St Mary Simple W gl col 2) of the Holy Spirit 3) for the Church or Bishop—for the Community of Saint Mary

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St. Bede Lectures . . .

The Rev'd J. V. Langmead Casserley, Professor of Dogmatic Theology at the General Seminary, will deliver the 1954 St. Bede Lectures. The lectures will be given in the Guild Hall of St. Thomas' Church, 1 West 53rd Street, Manhattan, on three Monday evenings, January 11th, 18th, and 25th, beginning at 8:30, and admission is free. The late Fr. Hughson was always interested in this project, and the other works of the St. Bede Library. The general theme of Dr. Casserley's lectures will be *The Art of Christian Thinking*.

Lord, Hear My Prayer . . .

is the title of our latest publication, and it is a book on the Collects for the Church Year from *The Book of Common Prayer*. There is a brief meditation on each Collect. The late Father Hughson wrote this, but the text was enlarged and edited by Fr. Gunn, O.H.C. The price is \$3.

Intercession . . .

This is a new book with the sub-title, "The Greatest Service", and it was written by Christine Fleming Heffner . . . wife of a priest, and mother of four children. The book was "forged in the furnace of adversity" during a long and painful illness, and what Mrs. Heffner has written on prayer, and praying for others, goes to the heart of the matter.

When Ye Pray . . .

This is a small book on the Lord's Prayer by the Rev'd Robert Lessing, of St. Mark's Church, Portland, Oregon. Father Lessing turned down a professional baseball career to study law. Later, he gave up the profes-

sion of law to study for the priesthood. The chapters are brief, clear and sound.

Episcopal Book Club . . .

On the opposite page you will see an advertisement for a new venture—*The Episcopal Book Club*, recently inaugurated in Nevada, Missouri. We hope that our readers will rally to the support of this Book Club, and please, when writing, mention HOLY CROSS MAGAZINE.

Price of Books . . .

Now and again we hear someone say to us, "Books cost too much", and this is especially apt to be said when the book is a small one. "Goodness, that much for that little book!" The Press tries to keep prices down, but we ask our friends to remember that whatever profit we make on our books goes to defray part of the yearly deficit on HOLY CROSS MAGAZINE. Also, it should be remembered that in setting the retail price of a book we have to allow for discounts to Dealers who handle our publications.

Making a Book . . .

Unless one has had a little personal experience, it is difficult to imagine the many details that go into the production of a book—even a little paperbound book. Many details have to be worked out before the printer sets the type—page-size, margins, type style, paging, etc., etc. From a typeset manuscript to the finished book—well, you ought to try it! One of the unsolved "mysteries" is why one book will sell; another will not. We may reject a manuscript because we question its value. Another publisher uses it and the book sells like hot cakes. Or, we may accept a manuscript with the visions of good sales . . . well, you know the rest.

